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HCR 178 HR 198
REQUESTING A STUDY TO EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF USING
PLANT MATERIALS, INCLUDING THE NEEM TREE, FOR PEST CONTROL
IN HAWAII AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Statement for
House Committee on
Agriculture
Public Hearing - April 5, 1989

By
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HCR 178 and HR 198 request a feasibility study of using plant materials in general, and the neem tree in particular, for pest control in Hawaii and the Asia-Pacific region, including the potential biological and economic impacts of importing exotic plants to Hawaii. Our statement on these resolutions does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We are strongly supportive of the intent of these resolutions. As appropriately recognized in the Whereas paragraphs, the use of plants with pesticidal properties should reduce the need for synthetic pesticides and thereby reduce the potential for contamination of ground water or accumulation of toxic residues.

Since approximately 1981, studies have been carried out by a team of researchers at the East West Center and the University of Hawaii under the direction of Dr. Saleem Ahmed. These studies have shown outstanding results with regard to identifying plants with pesticidal properties and in particular the promising pesticidal attributes of the neem tree.

The resolutions call for the Legislative Reference Bureau to conduct the study. Certainly the Botanical Pesticides Study Team headed by Dr. Ahmed should be a major contributor, if not the leader, in this study.

We must add one word of caution. As in all projects that involve potential biological introductions to the State of Hawaii, we strongly urge that the resolution be amended to recognize the need for careful study to assure that any proposed biological introductions will not adversely affect the existing Hawaiian ecology or become a pest.

A Unit of Water Resources Research Center

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